

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Huron School District Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2004-2005

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This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan for special education
- Curriculum and staff needs assessment
- Surveys
- Parental rights document
- Teacher file reviews
- Private school information
- State data tables
- Child find data
- Special services forms

Promising practice

The steering committee concluded the district child find activities are a community effort with Huron Public Schools receiving referrals from the medical community , preschool and daycare personnel, the Department of Social Services, Community Counseling Services), as well as parents. This effort is supported by school staff providing presentations/in-services/flyers in these environments.

The 2002-2003 suspension and expulsion data reflects that two students with disabilities in the district were suspended for more than 10 school days. Twenty-six non-disabled students were suspended or expelled for more than 10 school days during the same time period.

The Huron School District and Board of Education have provided training in LSCI (Life Space Crisis Intervention), CPI (Crisis Prevention Intervention), Circle of Courage Model, and consultations with Dr. Mark Freado, Larry Brendtro of Reclaiming Youth, and Kevin Steele of Children's Home Society. All new special education staff members are provided training as they are hired. The Huron Public Schools provide opportunities for alternative learning in SLC (Social Learning Classroom), Opportunity School, AIM High, and Pride High. After school study groups are available for students that need assistance.

Continuing education opportunities are offered on an ongoing basis for graduate credit or renewal credit. All para-professional received internet training through the University of Nebraska's "Project PARA" and met the requirements for NCLB. District-wide training is provided for staff working with ELL (English Language Learners).

All 22 staff members are certified or licensed to work with children with disabilities. Hiring fully certified staff is a priority for the Huron School District.

Program team meetings and interagency meetings are held weekly to address student issues. Boost-Up, Auditory Visual Entrainment (AVE), Hemisphere Specific Auditory Stimulation (HSAS) programs have been implemented at the elementary level.

Parents are able to monitor their child's grades, schedule, attendance and assignments through the "Parent Portal" and automated assignment recording system.

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the Huron School District effectively implements ongoing child find activities to identify children with disabilities ages birth to 21 and has in place a uniform system to maintain records of all child find activities. An effective pre-referral and referral system in place to ensure students are identified.

Huron School District follows the IDEA regulations in providing services to private school students. When the district refers or places a child with disabilities in a private school or facility, district representatives attend and participate in all meetings pertaining to the education of the child including the IEP.

Progress was seen in the SAT 9 scores in grades 2, 4, 8 and 11 for the years 1999 through 2002. In the spring of 2003 the district administrated the SAT 10 to grades 3 through 8 and grade 11.

Validation Results

Promising practice

Through interview and observation, the monitoring team agrees the Huron School District professional development model is driven by a district wide needs assessment. Staff development opportunities are available to all staff during the school year and summer. Training opportunities include Live Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI), Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI), Circle of Courage, Boost-Up which includes Auditory Visual Entertainment (AVE) and Hemisphere Specific Auditory Stimulation (HSAS) and English Language Learners (ELL). These opportunities for training emphasize prevention and intervention. As a result of extensive training the district is able to provide many options for student learning in addition to general coursework and vocational opportunities. Program opportunities include Social Learning Classroom (SLC), Developmental Living Classroom, (DLC), Opportunity School, AIM High, Pride High, Our Home, Independent Work Independent Life Learning (IWILL) and after school study groups. Local interagency team meetings (LIT) are held weekly with various players to coordinate individual services for students. Members from the community, such as court services and mental health, participate in the meetings which supports the wrap-around concept providing support for families.

Through interview, observation and a review of student records the monitoring team could not validate suspension procedures, child find, certified staff and trained para-professional as areas of promising practice as concluded by the steering committee. The district is meeting the requirements in each of these areas.

Meets requirements

The team agrees with the areas identified as meeting the requirements for general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Preschool age numbers of children screened
- Personnel development information
- Needs assessment information
- Personnel training
- Budget information
- District records of release to outside agencies
- File reviews
- State data tables
- Parent rights booklet
- Comprehensive plan

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the districts comprehensive plan and Parental Rights brochure outlines all requirements of a free appropriate P\public education (FAPE). Eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative school days are provided FAPE.

Validation Results**Meets requirements**

The monitoring team agrees with the areas identified as meeting the requirements for free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Surveys
- Teacher file reviews
- DDN campus
- General curriculum information
- Comprehensive plan
- Needs assessment information
- Personnel training
- Budget information
- List of tests currently used in the district
- List of out of district testing services used by the district
- Interpreters/signers used in the district
- Personnel with designated certification

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded students are not evaluated unless written consent is provided. Evaluation and reevaluation procedures are outlined in the district comprehensive plan. Proper identification of students is based on assessment data and review of comprehensive evaluation results as determined through the MDT. The school district ensures all reevaluations are conducted in accordance with all procedural requirements to ensure students are appropriately evaluated. Parental input was acquired but not always documented on the correct form. All staff are now making this a priority as they proceed through the re-evaluation process.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees evaluation and reevaluation procedures are outlined in the district comprehensive plan as concluded by the steering committee. Through observation, interview and a review of records, parent consent, comprehensive evaluation, proper identification and parent input were not validated as areas which meet requirements.

Needs improvement

Through interview and a review of student records, the monitoring team found evaluation reports did not consistently contain the name of the individual conducting the evaluation, the evaluation date, or the name of the evaluation instrument administered.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:25:04. Evaluation procedures.

The school district shall ensure a variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional and development information about the child, including information provided by the parents that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability and content of the child's IEP. The school districts shall ensure the child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, as applicable, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities.

Through interview and a review of 12 student records, the monitoring team could not validate parent input into the evaluation process. District procedure requires the contact date and parent input be documented on the prior notice/consent for evaluation. This procedure needs to be consistently implemented for all evaluation procedures.

A review of student records revealed transition evaluations were not completed for two students prior to turning age 16. Written notice/consent was received by the district to administer transition evaluations to four students as part of their comprehensive evaluation. There was no evidence the area of transition was evaluated for these students. Tests were also administered without parent consent for four other students. For example, a BASC and Connors (behavior evaluations) were administered and had not been included on the written notice/consent provided to the parents.

Issues requiring immediate attention

ARSD 24:05:22:03. Certified child.

A certified child is a child in need of special education or special education and related services who has received a multidisciplinary evaluation and has an individual education program formulated and approved by a local placement committee. Documentation supporting a child's disabling condition as defined by Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act must be maintained by the school district for verification of its annual federal child count.

The review team identified the following issues regarding three students:

1. Test scores for student #1 yielded an IQ of 86 with the lowest achievement score of 77. A regression score of 76 or below would be needed to verify eligibility under the category of learning disabled.
2. Testing scores for student #2 yielded an IQ of 89 with the lowest achievement score of 78. A regression score of 75 or below would be needed to verify eligibility under the category of learning disabled.
3. Test scores for student #3 yielded an IQ of 75 with adaptive scores of 81 – 88. All the achievement scores place the student average to below average. Current documentation does not support the disability category of mental retardation.

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Staff interview
- Parent rights brochure
- Prior notice form

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the Huron School District provides parental rights with written notice/consent for evaluation and reevaluation and with written prior notice of placement committee meetings, and at IEP meetings.

The district's comprehensive plan ensures the rights of a child are protected if no parent can be identified. The school district works closely with the Department of Social Services and Court services to determine and contact the legal guardians of students.

The Huron School District comprehensive plan adheres to the policies mandated by IDEA and FERPA and procedures for responding to complaints and due process hearing.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

Through interview and a review of records the monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher file reviews
- Student progress data
- Personnel development information
- Needs assessment information
- Personnel training
- Budget information
- Surveys

Promising practice

The steering committee concluded areas of positive practice are the districts plan for reintegrating students into the least restrictive environment, the individual education program (IEP) format and timelines guide and the extended school year process guide

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the district provides written notice for all IEP meetings and makes a good faith effort to encourage parent participation in the IEP meetings. The district has adopted the state recommended IEP form that ensures that the required content is addressed. Staff members have participated in state sponsored workshops. The district has created an outline with timelines and requirements as a guide for staff members. Transition is addressed in all IEP's of students age 14 and older and the comprehensive plan outlines the policies and procedures to ensure that an appropriate IEP is developed for eligible students.

Validation Results**Promising practice**

The monitoring team could not validate the district reintegration, extended school year or IEP forms/timelines documented as areas of promising practice for the district. The documents are well developed and provide excellent information regarding the district procedures; however, these practices are required.

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees the district provides written notice for all IEP meeting and solicits parent involvement in the IEP meetings. The district used the DDN Campus program to develop student IEPs. The "special education forms and timelines requirements outline" provides staff with a good overview the IDEA requirements to ensure that an appropriated IEP is developed for eligible students. Transition in the IEPs of all students age 14 and older could not be validated as an area that consistently meets requirements.

Needs Improvement

The district provides many programs and services for students with disabilities of transition age. Agency and community involvement for these students is a priority. District staff need to consistently document in student IEPs the coordinated set of activities based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests. Through file reviews and interview the monitoring noted some inconsistencies in documenting an outcome oriented process for some students. The district needs to continue to review and develop student centered transition plans.

Through interview and file review at the middle school and high school the monitoring team noted that not all progress reports included student progress toward the annual goals. District policy is to report progress to families using the progress report document form from the DDN Campus IEP program. This procedure needs to be consistently implemented across all grade levels.

Out of compliance**ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program.**

A student's IEP must contain present levels of performance based upon the specific skill areas affected by the student's disability. The present levels of performance are based upon the functional assessment information gathered during the comprehensive evaluation process. Present levels of performance must contain the student's strength, needs, effect of the disability on the student's involvement/progress in the general curriculum and parent input.

Through interview and a review of student records, present levels of performance did not consistently contain skill based strengths and needs for each goal area or the students involvement in the general curriculum. Therefore, annual goals did not represent skills the student could reasonably be expected to accomplish within a 12 month period. For example, “will complete math standards at 100% accuracy” and “will complete the LA-11 resource room program during the 2004-2005 school year”.

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program.

A student’s IEP must contain an explanation of the extent, if any, to which the student will not participate with non-disabled students in the regular class and in activities.

Through a review of student files and teacher interview, the justification for placement did not consistently explain why the student with disabilities could not receive instruction in the regular classroom setting with non-disabled peers. For example, “will continue to work on academics and counseling goals...” or “the team felt he needed assistance to improve his writing and organizational skills”.

ARSD 24:05:25:26. Extended school year authorized. The district shall provide special education or special education and related services to eligible children if the IEP team determines on an individual basis that such services are necessary for the provision of FAPE.

An IEP pursuant to chapter 24:05:27 shall be developed by the IEP team and implemented with informed parental consent. The IEP team shall determine the length of the school day and duration of extended school year services based on the individual child's needs.

In implementing the requirements of this section, a district may not:

- (1) Limit extended school year services to particular categories of disability;
- (2) Unilaterally limit the type, amount, or duration of those services; or
- (3) Apply a regression/recoupment criterion to children in need of prolonged assistance.

A review of student records indicated extended school year (ESY) procedures were inconsistently implemented. The length of school day and duration of services for one student stated “will continue to work on academics and counseling”. Consent for ESY was provided in the IEP for another student but services and dates were not documented. Interviews indicated a lack of understanding of the process to determining the need for ESY and that ESY must be determined for “all” students regardless of the severity of their disability. In another instance, ESY services were to be determined by an established date. A meeting to determine the length of school day and duration of services was not held. Parents were just sent copies of the goal pages.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- File reviews
- Parent, student, general educator surveys
- General curriculum information
- Needs assessment information

- Personnel training
- Budget information

Promising practice

The steering committee concluded the district provides alternative settings for students such as SLC (Social Learning Classroom), Opportunity School, Pride High, AIM High, IWILL, DLC, etc. enabling students to remain in their home district.

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded over half of students in the district on an IEP have been placed in the regular classroom with modifications over the last three years.

Validation Results**Promising practice**

Through interview and program observation the monitoring team agrees with the areas identified as promising practices as concluded by the steering committee.

Meets requirements

Through classroom observation and review of placement data the monitoring team agrees with the areas identifies as meeting requirements as concluded by the steering committee.